Railway freight charges

765. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Wilf'the Minister RAILWAY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Goverment's attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "Railways line up core sector freight sops to boost earnings", appeared in the Economic Times dated 14th November, 1998;

(b) if so, the reasons for fall in freight;

(c) whether this decline is seasonal; and

(d) the details of steps proposed to arrest this decline in freight earning by Railways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Drop in demand from the core sectors of the economy which includes power, coal, foodgrains, cement, fertilizer and steel has been mainly responsible for the drop in freight loading. Besides, freight loading has also been affected by strikes in Singareni Collieries, and Chennai Port, and by cyclone in Gujarat.

(c) The decline is not seasonal in nature.

(d) The following measures have been taken to arrest the decline in earnings and to make railway freight rates competitive so as to win back, traffic:—

(i) From 20.6.1998 following revisions had been effected:—

  (a) No general increase in freight charges effected.

  (b) Reduction in classification of gypsum (lumps and powder), limestone and dolomite.

  (c) Continuance of reduced classification for iron and steel items.

  (d) Revision in taper of cement, coal and iron and steel.

(ii) Reduced station to station rates for specific commodities are quoted in deserving cases.

(iii) Volume discount scheme has been introduced in respect of cement, iron & steel, iron ore, sponge iron and clinker traffic for the current year.

(iv) Revision in classification and minimum weight condition of commodities is done, wherever found justified.

(v) Container Corporation of India has created a separate Domestic division to capture less than train load, non-bulk traffic by using the multi-model containerisation route.

Railway projects in Orissa

766. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the ongoing railway projects in Orissa;

(b) the progress of those projects, as on date; and

(c) the details of the estimated cost of those projects and the funds released by the Central Government therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (c) Details are given in the Annexure *(See* Appendix 185, Annexure No. 20)

Accidents at Unmanned Level Crossings

767. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA:

Will the Minister RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that RDSO has not come out with any foolproof system to avert accidents at unmanned level crossings;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the present status of research work carried out by RDSO in this regard with details;

(d) whether it is a fact that most of the accidents at the level crossings occur due to lack of whistling signals while trains approach unmanned level crossings; and

(e) if so, the details of steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATS' IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE DM THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir. Although RDSO has standardized the specifications for Train Actuated Warning Device, a pilferproof, failsafe reliable system has not yet been developed.

(b) 1. The equipments developed by 2-3 companies including Bharat Electronics are still under trial. A pilferproof, failsafe reliable model is yet to be successfully developed.

2. However, accidents at unmanned level crossings are occurring due to negligence of road users. To contain this type of accidents, railways are taking following safety measures:-

(i) Exhibiting Road Sign Board and providing rumble strips to intimate Road users the presence of unmanned level crossing.

(ii) Ensuring provision of Whistle Boards to pre-warn road users.

(iii) Educative publicity campaign through TV., Radio, Newspapers, public address system, distribution of pamphlets, displaying of posters at POL outlets.

(iv) Provision of Speed breakers and road signs at the approaches of unmanned level crossings by road authorities.

(v) Involvement of village Panchayats in their Public awareness programmes.

(c) Trail of Train Actuated Warning Device of RDSO's specification is being undertaken at manned Level Crossings on Western Railway and Eastern Railway in co-ordination with RDSO.

(d) and (e) No, Sir. For the guidance of drivers, whistle boards have been provided on all unmanned level crossing gates. Periodically drives are launched to counsel the train driversto whistle while approaching the level crossings to pre-warn the road users.

Officers working in the Directorates of Railway Board

768. SHRI JALALUDIN ANSARI: Will the Minister RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that atleast sixty officers are working in the same directorate of Railway Board i.e. stores, traffic, engineering, commercial, electrical, establishment, mechanical, etc., as section officer, Dy. Director, Joint Director and Executive Director for the last ten to twelve years continuously;

(b) if so, the details thereof, with names of officers; and

(c) the norms/rules and period fixed by the Ministry for a person to work in the same directorate of Railway Board?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (c) In the office of Railway Board, some posts are manned by officers of Organised Railway Services, drawn from Zonal Railways/ Production Units on tenure basis which is 3 years for Senior Scale officers, 4 years for Junior Administrative Grade officers and 5 years for Selection Grade and Senior Administrative Grade officers. No officer from Organised Railway Services is working in Board's office in the same Directorate for more than 10 years.

There are some posts in Railway Board's office which are manned by officers of Railway Board Secretariat Service (RBSS). In this category although there are some officers who had been working in the same Directorate, in lower grades, but there is no officer who has been working in the same grade in the same Directorate for more than 10 years.

For the smooth functioning of Directorate concerned, the controlling officers desire to have some experienced hands and therefore, on promotion, some of the officers are retained in the same Directorate. Even in the same Directorate there is wide difference between the functions and responsibilities of different posts. This difference is more prominent between the lower grade and higher grade